

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, SNAR, PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT:CONSULAR MEETING WITH AMSTER, BURN AND BRAWER

REF: MOSCOW 18773

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES FULL AND COMPLETE READ-OUT OF
NOVEMBER 26 CONSULAR ACCESS MEETING WITH AMSTER, BURN, AND
BRAWER.

2. THE CONSISTENT VIEW OF OFFICERS IN THE DEPARTMENT
KNOWLEDGABLE OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES' TREATMENT OF DRUG OF-

FENDERS IS THAT AMSTER,BURN AND BRAWER ARE BEING TREATED AS
WELL OR BETTER THAN OTHER AMERICANS IMPRISONED ABROAD.
IN FACT, THE SITUATION OF THESE PRISONERS, HAVING WORK TO
DO RATHER THAN SITTING IN CELLS, HAVING AN ADEQUATE DIET
(WHICH THE AUTHORITIES ALLOW THEM TO SUPPLEMENT WITH GIFTS
OF FOOD FROM RELATIVES), HAVING ADEQUATE CLOTHES AND,
SHELTER, AND PERHAPS OF MOST IMPORTANCE, HAVING PRISON
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AUTHORITIES WHO DO NOT MISTREAT THEM, LEAVES THEM MUCH

BETTER OFF THAN MANY AMERICANS IN JAIL IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD. NEVERTHELESS, ONE ASPECT OF THEIR SITUATION GIVES US MORE THAN ORDINARY CONCERN. THE POSSIBILITY OF DETERIORATING HEALTH, (REFTEL PARAS 2B, 3, AND 5), ESPECIALLY IN AMSTER'S CASE, SUGGESTS THE NEED FOR THE EMBASSY TO MONITOR THE THREE CLOSELY THROUGH REGULAR CONSULAR MEETINGS AT INTERVALS AS CLOSE AS THE SOVIETS WILL ALLOW. WE WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND THAT DR. JOHNSON ACCOMPANY THE VICE CONSUL AT THE NEXT MEETING. IN VIEW OF AMSTER'S LONG HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND THE SYMPTOMS REPORTED REFTEL, WE BELIEVE EMBASSY SHOULD, AT A TIME AND IN A MANNER YOU FEEL APPROPRIATE, REEMPHASISE TO THE SOVIETS THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN YOUR NOTE NUMBER 1651 (NOVEMBER 18) TO THE MFA.

3. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES EMBASSY'S THOROUGH PRESENTATION OF THE CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN OFFICIALLY SUPPORTING THE PRISONERS' APPEAL FOR EARLY RELEASE. EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING (REFTEL, PARA 5) THAT THE USG SUPPORTS SUCH APPEALS GENERALLY, IS INCORRECT; HOWEVER. IN CASES WHERE CHARGES, TRIALS, AND PUNISHMENTS APPEAR REASONABLE AND FAIR, AS IS THE CASE WITH AMSTER, BURN, AND BRAWER, WE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ALTER THE COURSE OF LOCAL JUSTICE. WE ARE OBLIGATED BY LAW TO SEE TO THE PRISONERS' WELFARE, AN OBLIGATION EMBASSY IS ADMIRABLY CARRYING OUT. IT IS NOT US POLICY, ON THE OTHER HAND, TO TRY TO EASE THE BURDEN OF LAWFUL PUNISHMENT.

4. DEPARTMENT WILL NOTIFY RELATIVES OF THE PRISONERS OF RESULTS OF THE NOVEMBER 26 MEETING AND PASS ON TO THEM THE APPEALS FOR LETTERS TO PODGORNYY, ETC. IN DOING THIS, WE WILL INFORM RELATIVES THAT THESE LETTERS WOULD CONSTITUTE PRIVATE APPEALS FOR CLEMENCY WHICH MIGHT HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT (REFTEL PARA, 6). IF ASKED TO SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS OFFICIALLY, WE WOULD DECLINE.

5. YOU SHOULD NOT, RPT NOT RELEASE ANY DETAILS OF CONSULAR MEETINGS, PAST OR FUTURE. IF ASKED ABOUT APPEALS, BY THE PRESS YOU SHOULD SAY THAT ANY POSSIBLE CLEMENCY APPEALS ARE PRIVATE MATTERS INVOLVING THE PRISONERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ONLY. ROBINSON

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